

THE LAST HEAD SHOP IN ALHAMBRA

At the last head shop in Alhambra
the high school kids snicker and giggle
at all of the busted and flyblown paraphernalia
while the proprietor reads the National Enquirer
with yellow eyes.

At the last head shop in Alhambra
it seems more like a museum --
a cut-rate museum of cultural history,
full of condemned rainbows,
flesh & nightmare kaleidoscopes,
and other grim reminders
of the politics of electric neurology.

At the last head shop in Alhambra
they are having a special on Janis Joplin posters
(was \$2.00 now 25¢)
and 75-watt blacklite bulbs
(was \$3.99 now 69¢),
and if you hurry, you can pick up
(for next to nothing)
a fake-ass day-glo illustration of infinity
and a faded fluorescent bumpersticker that says:
"Strawberry Fields Forever."

-- Gary Griest

Los Alamitos CA

A SUSPENSION BRIDGE ACROSS A CHASM

pretended to be a footbridge across a drainage ditch.

"Pay the bridge a penny," said a little hand-written card
by a coffeecup full of pennies. And travellers would
drop a penny in the cup if they were honest, ignore the
card if they were so-so, or steal from the cup if they
were fuckers. But whatever they were, when they got to
the middle of the bridge it would rear up and thrust a
large, professionally-lettered sign in their faces.
"GIVE ME EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT OR I TOSS YOU IN THE CHASM!"

So that there were always naked people hurrying off the
bridge, which brought even more people hurrying on to see
the free private parts.

So that the bridge became so rich it hired another bridge to cheat people while it toured the world, stretching over grand and scenic places letting the little fools swarm over it and call it "brother."

THE HYPNOTIC TURTLE

A turtle whose shell makes people think they're rich, crawls into a shack and tries to burrow under an unemployed weed-surgeon's foot.

"Momma, bring me a little caviar. And do see that Robert waxes the Caddy before we go to the club," he yells to his wife, who squats in a corner boiling a shoe.

She picks up her crutch to give him a good drubbing, but sees the turtle and coos, "Yes dear, but can I please have a new coat -- chinchilla would be divine."

"Anything for my angel," croons the man, feeling good for the first time in years. "But what's this? Reggie's let some silly animal in the house." He picks up the turtle and walks toward the door.

"I wonder how far I can throw this thing?" he chuckles, grinning at his wife over his shoulder, like a man about to step off a roof.

ZINJANTHROPUS DISEASE

What would he do? What would become of him, stricken with Zinjanthropus Disease? No one had ever had it. There were no precedents. But he refused to fool himself. A thing was what it was. Zinjanthropus Disease. How else explain the receding forehead, increasing stoop, flattening nose, hairiness (him, who'd avoided beaches, cursing his naked chest). And the wild craving to sit in a cave by a sacred fire and gnaw on charred giant-sloth leg! How he envied pregnant women, whose pickles-and-yogurt cravings were tolerated, satisfied, encouraged.

Like any smart young man, he'd put off marrying until he'd sowed his wild oats, and put off sowing until his job left him time, which it hadn't yet. Where would he find a mate now, looking like he did? How would he rise in his firm? The grappling hooks he'd thrown over that vice-presidency -- and which had caught, too -- were growing brittle, like vines in winter.

Try as he would, he couldn't conceptualize the way he used to.